



Italian teachers visit Cumbria, UK

Global Schools / News / Italian teachers visit Cumbria, UK



How is Global Citizenship Education integrated in school didactics across Europe? An exchange programme allows primary schools teachers to experience first hand the educational system of another EU country

By Martina Camatta, TCIC

Global Schools is a project articulated in several activities targeting teachers, civil servants, decision makers, and the educational community at large. Among them, an exchange programme allows primary schools teachers to experience first hand the educational system of another country and how/if Global Citizenship Education (GCE) is integrated in their didactics.

Ten Italian teachers spent 5 days in Cumbria, UK, to visit the English partner schools and their fellow colleagues. The stay provided the possibility for the Italian participants to have an insight of different schools' realities, to see how local authorities and other stakeholders engage in the education process, and to observe how GCE themes are introduced to English students.

Prior to the exchange, both the Italian and the English teachers created their 'teacher ID'. This helped putting them in contact, getting to know each other, and finding mutual interests and didactic affinities. Then, they started a distant collaboration to design GCE activities to be jointly realised in the classrooms.

During the exchange, the Italian teachers kept a daily journal to note their observations and learnings, that were then shared with their English colleagues at the end of the exchange. This allowed for a moment of mutual reflection on the overall experience.

This site uses cookies. By continuing to browse the site, you are agreeing to our use of cookies. [Find out more.](#) [Close](#)

The programme of the exchange was divided in two main parts: a plenary introductory session led by the English partner CDEC; and an individual observation by each Italian teacher, who spent some days in one of the different villages and schools involved in the exchange.

Shared activities

DAY 1 – The staff of the Cumbria Development Education Centre (CDEC) warmly welcomed the Italian delegation (10 teachers and a staff member of TCIC) and explained the activities of CDEC. Clive Belgeonne, Global Education advisor of the Development Education Centre South Yorkshire, introduced the context of GCE in Cumbria and the United Kingdom. The Italian teachers noticed how particular attention is placed on active participation (on doing rather than on learning how to do) and on the transfer of competences and skills to the young pupils.

The group then moved to the Lake District National Park Centre, in Brockhole. The Centre is a non-profit attraction run by the Lake District National Park Authority, which organises a wide range of learning sessions for all age groups. These involve an exhibition, a film and quiz about the Lake District National Park, stunning gardens and grounds providing the ideal outdoor learning environment. Additionally, it offers opportunities for boat trips, water sports sessions, high rope course challenges and orienteering courses and trails in the grounds.

DAY 2 - The day started with a presentation of the educational resources that CDEC uses, and the trainer, Debbie Watson, provided Italian teachers with specialised websites that offer free didactic resources on GCE. Then, the group had the opportunity to experience in person some activities in the English classrooms.

The group visited Woodmatters an example to showcase the importance of the relation between the local area and its community. The use of recycled materials, of natural resources as well as their safeguard revealed the attention to sustainable development and environmental preservation. The Centre is an important partner for local schools and families, as it offers numerous experiences for students and children. It also demonstrates the relevance of complementary activities, outside the traditional setting, in the GCE of young students.

Later, the Italian delegation visited a Lake School in Windermere, where the English teacher Robin Sharpe and his students explained the role of global leaders: through peer education , these students involve the younger pupils from the primary schools in GCE activities. CDEC assists the global leaders in the organisation of the activities, and runs the training of the teachers.

This site uses cookies. By continuing to browse the site, you are agreeing to our use of cookies. [Find out more.](#) [Close](#)

At the end of the day, the Italian teachers met their English host colleagues, and moved to their individual exchange destinations.

Individual observation

The schools - Overall, participants shared similar experiences and observations. The host primary schools have a varying number of students and thus varying size, but are usually organised from 1st to 6th grade. In Cumbria, every class is assigned a single teacher, and often an assistant. The classrooms are spacious and filled with didactic tools, such as posters, books and maps. Every classroom is also provided with interactive whiteboards, computers and tablets; often with a sink for workshop activities. The desks are arranged in small islands, to facilitate group-works, discussions and cooperation. Often, these groups represent the different levels attained by the students: each group is assigned an activity of different level during the lessons.

The students are required to wear a uniform, and the school supplies (notebooks, pens and pencils) are provided by the schools. The pupils do not bring these items home, but usually leave their belongings in the school lockers. This means that the students are rarely assigned homeworks. For the lunch break, the students can bring a small meal from home or use the school canteen. Most of the Italian teachers were surprised to see that the school gyms also serve as canteens and auditoriums, an unexpected arrangement to them, due to the strict rules of hygiene and security in Italy.

The local teachers spend their lunch breaks in the teachers' rooms that are equipped with a small kitchen and relax area. The teachers from Trentino noticed the great amount of autonomy and independence of the English pupils, which are often left unsupervised.

Finally, great importance is given to the recognition of the pupils' individual achievements. Every day, a general assembly is held in the auditorium, where the students sing the schools' anthems, and the headmaster awards the most prominent students. This is believed to increase the feeling of belonging to the institution, and the strive of students to improve themselves.

The activities - During their stay in the host schools, the Italian teachers had the opportunity to witness and participate in GCE activities organised in the classrooms.

During the lessons, teachers noticed the tendency to prioritise critical thinking and the development of certain life skills. This is achieved through a great interaction among students and between students and teachers, a very active didactic methodology, and methods that bring the students to find interdisciplinary connections.

One of the most appreciated activity was the one in which the students were asked to design a superhero, that would help solve issues such as social injustice, poverty, and
This site uses cookies. By continuing to browse the site, you are agreeing to our use of cookies. [Find out more.](#) [Close](#)

then asked about the qualities and skills required. This created active discussions, starting from an appealing activity for the pupils and moving to the relevant global citizenship-related issues.

Final reflections - Despite the differences between the two school systems, the Italian teachers reported the possibility to implement some activities or aspects of their English experience in their everyday teaching life. The exchange also inspired them to reinforce the link between their teaching practice and the other stakeholders within their communities, as a useful means to bring GCE in the classrooms.

This will be further developed through the second part of the exchange in March 2017, when the English teachers will be visiting their Italian colleagues in Trentino and Marche.

🕒 24/02/2017 12:00 pm

Tweet

Condividi

G+